WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A data converting apparatus which inputs packet data made of content data supplemented with recording control information to be referenced upon recording of said content data and which outputs the input packet data to another apparatus, said data converting apparatus including:

inputting means for inputting said packet data;

separating means for separating said content data and said recording control information from said packet data input by said inputting means;

determining means for determining whether the separated recording control information constitutes a value matching any one of values in a first value group;

replacing means for replacing said recording control information with any one value from said first value group depending on the value constituted by said separated recording control information;

generating means for generating said packet data by supplementing said content data with said recording control information to be referenced upon recording of said content data;

outputting means for outputting said packet data to the other apparatus; and

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controlling means which, if said determining means determines that said recording control information separated by said separating means constitutes a second value different from any one of the values in said first value group, then causes said generating means to supplement said content data separated by said separating means with that one of the values in said first value group which is used by said replacing means to replace said second value constituted by said recording control information, said controlling means further causing said outputting means to output said packet data generated by said generating means.

2. A data converting apparatus according to claim 1, wherein, if said determining means determines that said separated recording control information matches one of the values in said first value group, then said controlling means causes said outputting means to output to the other apparatus the same packet data that have been input.

3. A data converting apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said controlling means causes said generating means to generate the same input packet data by supplementing the separated content data with said separated recording control information.

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4. A data converting apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said recording control information includes data for restricting copy of said content data.

5. A data converting apparatus according to claim 4, further comprising clocking means for managing time;

wherein said replacing means permits copy of said content data based on a copy inhibit period included in said recording control information and on current time information furnished by said clocking means.

6. A data converting apparatus according to claim 4, further comprising receiving means for receiving a data transmission request from the other apparatus to which said packet data are output;

wherein, if said receiving means receives from the other apparatus a data transmission request for content data reproduction, then said recording control information is replaced with copy inhibit data before being output to the other apparatus.

7. A data converting apparatus according to claim 4, further comprising storing means for storing the number of times each of items constituting said content data has been copied;

wherein, if copy of a given content data item is requested, then said controlling means checks what is

stored in said storing means and replaces said recording control information with copy inhibit data for output depending on whether the stored number of times the content data item in question has been copied exceeds a copiable count predetermined for said content data item.

8. A data converting apparatus according to claim 4, further comprising communicating means for communicating with a copyright management unit which transmits copy permission information regarding each of items constituting said content data;

wherein, if copy permission information is received from said copyright management unit, then said controlling means replaces said recording control information with a copy permission for output.

9. A data converting apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said recording control information is replaced with one-generation copy permission information which allows the other apparatus having input said content data from said data converting apparatus to copy said content data to a second apparatus and which inhibits said second apparatus to copy said content data to a third apparatus.

10. A data converting apparatus according to claim 4, further comprising compressing means for compressing said content data;

wherein, if uncompressed copy of said content data is inhibited, then said controlling means allows said content data after being compressed by said compressing means to be output to the other apparatus.

11. A data converting method for causing a data converting apparatus to input packet data made of content data supplemented with recording control information to be referenced upon recording of said content data and for outputting the input packet data from said data converting apparatus to another apparatus, said data converting method comprising the steps of:

inputting said packet data;

separating said content data and said recording control information from said packet data input in said inputting step;

determining whether the separated recording control information constitutes a value matching any one of values in a first value group;

replacing said recording control information with any one value from said first value group if said determining step determines that said separated recording control information constitutes a second value different from any one of the values in said first value group;

generating said packet data by supplementing the

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separated content data with said recording control information to be referenced upon recording of said content data; and

outputting said packet data to the other apparatus.

12. A data converting method according to claim 11, wherein, if said determining step determines that said separated recording control information matches one of the values in said first value group, then said outputting step outputs to the other apparatus the same packet data that have been input.

13. A data converting method according to claim 12, wherein said generating step generates the same input packet data by supplementing the separated content data with said separated recording control information.

14. A data converting method according to claim 11, wherein said recording control information includes data for restricting copy of said content data.

15. A data converting method according to claim 14, wherein said replacing step replaces said recording control information with copy permission information allowing said content data to be copied based on a copy inhibit period included in said recording control information and on current time information.

16. A data converting apparatus according to claim

14, wherein, if a data transmission request for content data reproduction is received from the other apparatus, then said recording control information is replaced with copy inhibit data before being output to the other apparatus.

17. A data converting method according to claim 14, wherein, if copy of a given content data item is requested, then said replacing step replaces said recording control information with copy inhibit data for output depending on whether a stored number of times the content data item in question has been copied exceeds a copiable count predetermined for said content data item.

18. A data converting method according to claim 14, wherein, if copy permission information is received from a copyright management unit, then said replacing step replaces said recording control information with a copy permission for output.

19. A recording medium which records a program for causing a data converting apparatus to input packet data made of content data supplemented with recording control information to be referenced upon recording of said content data and for outputting the input packet data from said data converting apparatus to another apparatus, said program comprising the steps of:

inputting said packet data;

separating said content data and said recording control information from said packet data input in said inputting step;

determining whether the separated recording control information constitutes a value matching any one of values in a first value group;

replacing said recording control information with any one value from said first value group if said determining step determines that said separated recording control information constitutes a second value different from any one of the values in said first value group;

generating said packet data by supplementing the separated content data with said recording control information to be referenced upon recording of said content data; and

outputting said packet data to the other apparatus.

20. A recording medium according to claim 19, wherein said recording control information includes data for restricting copy of said content data.